

Ethical Behaviour Committee

Report to the CFUW National Board

Committee Members:

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Background

Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW/FCFDU) is a leading national equality-seeking, organization that works to advance the human rights of women and girls. Our vision is of a strong national organization working to ensure that all girls and women have equal opportunities and equal access to quality education within a peaceful and secure environment where their human rights are respected. CFUW enhances its role as a national, bilingual, independent organization striving to promote education, equality, social justice, fellowship and life-long learning for women and girls working in a spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Our core values include: **Human Rights; Empowerment; Respect and Caring; Trust and Cooperation Equality; and Integrity.**

An organization's code of ethical behaviour encompasses core values and is integral to a respectful and supportive environment. The code outlines clear expectations for expected behaviour. The code is applicable to members, staff and our partners. A code of ethical behaviour demonstrates responsible stewardship.

Statement of Intent

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) places the highest value on the integrity of its employees and members.

The purpose of this document is to provide a Code of Ethical conduct and procedure for CFUW stakeholders, all of whom are expected to comply. The CFUW stakeholders are the CFUW members, staff and volunteers.

Application

CFUW members, employees and volunteers are the stakeholders of this code and the code applies to the actions of all stakeholders of the CFUW organization in all circumstances and at every level of the organization.

Any organizations or corporations that interface with CFUW will be expected to exhibit similar ethical standards, and CFUW will seek organizations and corporations of similar ethical standards with whom to interface.

Associated Policies

Respectful Treatment; Privacy and Confidentiality; Social Media

Policy Definitions

What is Ethical Behaviour?

The term “*ethical behaviour*” refers to how an organization ensures that all its decisions, actions, and stakeholder interactions conform to the organization’s moral and professional principles. These principles should support all applicable laws and regulations and are the foundation for the organization’s culture and values. They distinguish “*right*” from “*wrong*.”

Senior leaders should act as role models for these principles of *behaviour*. The principles apply to all people involved in the organization, from temporary members of the workforce to members of the board of directors, and need to be communicated and reinforced on annually. Although there is no universal model for *ethical behaviour*, senior leaders should ensure that the organizations organization’s mission and vision are aligned with its *ethical* principles.

Ethical behaviour should be practised with all stakeholders: CFUW members, employees, volunteers and organizations that interface with CFUW.

While some organizations may view their *ethical* principles as boundary conditions restricting *behaviour*, well-designed and clearly articulated *ethical* principles should empower people to make effective decisions with great confidence.

Definition of Risk and Why do we need a Code of Ethical Behaviour?

Risk management is a structured approach to managing uncertainty related to a threat, through a sequence of human activities including: risk assessment, strategies, development to manage it, and mitigation of risk using managerial resources.

Ethics is derived from the word ‘ethos’ meaning character or custom. As a noun: moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conducting of an activity.

Ethics policies are more than just rules to mitigate risk or control behaviour or to ensure that laws are obeyed. They actively form the basis for positive interaction, achievement of objectives and a healthy organization. The Ethical Behaviour Policy sets out what you can expect from others and what they can expect from you. All members and staff of CFUW shall understand their responsibilities as it relates to this policy and be bound to observe its content. All situations cannot be covered in any one document; therefore, members and staff are also bound to observe the intent of the policy.

In most societies, it is understood that members are required to be of honourable character and reputation... and to require its members to refrain from conduct injurious to the organization and its purposes. (RONR (11th ed.), p.643, II 3-4, 8-10)

The reputation of the organization is based on member’s and staff’s internal and external behaviour. The expectation is that we act with decorum, be honest, courteous, act without discrimination, use authority appropriately, be fair and equitable, declare conflicts of interest and abide by all CFUW’s policies or documents that govern behaviour or actions.

It is expected that any organizations that CFUW, its members, or councils may do business with, partner, join or form an affiliation with, will comply with the CFUW standards of ethical behaviour. Please refer to Appendix B for *Tests of Ethical Behaviour*.

Code of Ethical Behaviour Policy:

1. Sensitivity & Fairness - To CFUW and To Each Other

Sensitivity to the needs of CFUW and to each other involves being polite, even under difficult conditions, in times of stress, and in the face of provocation that does not involve a violation of the law. Actions such as abusive, threatening, insulting, offensive or provocative statements or gestures to, or about, another person are not permitted.

CFUW is committed to leading by example. This commitment is based on the following principles which apply to our employees, partners, and to one another:

- We treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect
- We act with honesty and integrity in our dealings with our partners and each other
- We demonstrate knowledge and competence in carrying out our work
- We ensure our employees have the right skills and training to do the jobs and to respond appropriately to individual needs and interests
- We respect personal privacy, and protect personal information.
- We demonstrate fairness and equity
- We are open and transparent
- We demonstrate responsible stewardship and governance.

2. CFUW Communication, Social Networking & Blogging

A. Representation

This policy recognizes that emerging social media/collaboration platforms (blogs, wikis, on-line social networks/publishing/discussion/video and more) are changing the way people communicate and engage with each other.

When CFUW communicates publicly – whether to members or to the public – there is an accepted process. Only those officially designated by CFUW have the authorization to speak on behalf of the CFUW organization.

B. Social networking and blogging

Social networking and blogging are primarily forms of communication among individuals. However, the CFUW Respectful Treatment must be adhered to when referring to CFUW in

general, or to CFUW in connection with members, staff ,volunteers or any organizations that interface with CFUW.

If participating in social media and media activities on your own time, the following guidelines apply:

- You are fully responsible for what you write or say.
- Do not purport to represent CFUW positions, strategies or opinions, or those of external organizations.
- Assume that what you have written will be read by others (including work and personal colleagues, clients, customers and stakeholders) and can be acted upon. You are fully responsible for what you write or say. Do not disclose or use CFUW confidential, proprietary, sensitive, and financial or business performance information or that of any other person, affiliation or partnership or any other such information online. (exception – that which is already public knowledge or online on the CFUW public website).
- Do not use or disclose any material that violates the privacy of others. Be mindful that what you write will be public for a long time.
- Do not post material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or entity. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding the CFUW, CFUW employees, CFUW members, CFUW Board of Directors, CFUW’s partners. Refer to the Respectful Treatment policy.
- CFUW actively monitors social media for mention of our organization. This is common practice in most large businesses, government agencies and non-profit organizations.
- Anyone who writes or speaks about CFUW online can expect that their comments will be noted by CFUW and be subject to this policy and any other it may fall under. Those officially designated to speak and write on behalf of CFUW are expected to conduct themselves with this same degree of decorum, and all CFUW stakeholders are encouraged to keep these principles in mind when communicating to and about external personalities and organizations.

3. On-line Discussion Forums

Members may from time to time have an on-line moderated member’s discussion forum for open and respectful communication to and among each other. If a discussion board is in place, it will be used only by registered participants. Members should not share access to the Discussion Forum.

Whether in open forums, on blogs, or on on-line social networks, only those officially designated by CFUW have the authorization to speak on CFUW’s behalf, and then must do so according to the organization’s respectful treatment policy.

4. CFUW equipment:

Only pertinent members and invited guests should use the communications equipment (for example, teleconferencing or webinars) to conduct CFUW business. Employees are expected to use the CFUW equipment appropriately for the purposes of conducting CFUW business

5. Privacy/Confidentiality

CFUW takes privacy seriously. CFUW collects personal information for the use of the National Directory. Protecting the confidentiality of the information and appropriate use of the directory is everyone's responsibility.

Confidentiality applies to CFUW meeting discussions, emails and letters. Please refer to the privacy and confidentiality policy.

6. Sharing with Permission

Should a club wish to share their position on a topic, it must be done with the recipient's permission. There should be no misuse of the CFUW Directory

7. Representation of the Facts

Clubs demonstrate ethical conduct with cite sourcing of their positions on a topic.

8. Business Expenses & Financial Accountability:

The CFUW's financial, accounting and other reports and records will accurately and fairly reflect the transactions and financial condition of the CFUW in reasonable detail, and in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), practices, procedures and legal requirements.

Payment of expenses will only be authorized when used for the designated purpose.

Everyone will exercise integrity, prudence, and judgment when they incur and approve business expenses. The expenses must be reasonable and necessary for CFUW business.

The ethics of finances are based on the core values of transparency and accountability. Ethical behavior of members consists of but is not limited to:

1. Respect and follow document retention policies

2. Respect and follow fundraising policies
3. Respect, support and correctly utilize all internal and external controls
4. Use transparent reporting practices at all times whether internally to members or externally to government agencies or other parties
5. Report all conflicts of interest
6. Maintain operating reserves
7. Understand and practice fiduciary duty to the organization
8. Follow accepted accounting practices

CFUW Respectful Treatment Policy

In any group differing opinions are normal but CFUW members commit to communicating in a respectful manner and honouring the dignity of all parties. A truly respectful CFUW requires the **cooperation and support** of every person in the organization. Everyone is responsible for setting a positive example and behaving in a manner which will not offend, embarrass or humiliate others, whether deliberately or unintentionally.

In an ethical organization, treating everyone with civility and respect is a fundamental value.

Questions and Answers re: Ethical Behaviour QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATING TO THE CFUW CODE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Note: While the questions that follow have been formatted for clubs, the content applies to all levels of the organization. It is not possible to cover all situations in this guide but the intent is that whatever the situation, a resolution should be sort in accordance with this policy.

1. What is an ethical organization?

It is an organization that ensures that its decisions, actions and stakeholder interactions conform to the organization's moral and ethical principles as outlined in its Code of Ethical Behaviour and Respectful Treatment Policy. These principles should support all applicable bylaws and regulations and are the foundation of the organization's cultures and values.

The senior leaders should act as role models for these principles of behaviour and ensure the organization's mission and visions are aligned with its ethical principles.

Well designed and clearly articulated ethical principles should empower the members to make effective decisions leading to a strong and confident organization.

2. **What is unethical behaviour?**

Unethical behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Speaking or representing on behalf of CFUW or CFUWs affiliates when you are not authorised to do so.
- Disclosing or using confidential material of CFUW or of any other organization or person
- Bullying and offensive or inappropriate remarks, gestures, material or behaviour
Writing, sharing or posting material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or entity
- Covert behaviour (inappropriately withholding information, undermining, underhandedness).

3. **To whom does this policy apply?**

This policy applies to all stakeholders within CFUW (club members, staff and volunteers). It applies to Club meetings as well as all activities connected to the club such as travel, conferences, club related social gatherings, and interest group settings, and the many forms of written and spoken interactions (telephone calls and all types of social media). It applies to interactions among members, staff, volunteers and the general public.

4. **How can Club Presidents and Executives ensure an ethical organization?**

They can:

- Ensure club members are aware of the Code of Ethical Behaviour document
- Ensure that any ethical issues that arise are responded to quickly, informally and in confidence
- Model ethical behaviour themselves
- Recognize and value diversity
- Create a supportive environment
- Monitor the club to ensure ethical behaviour is practiced

5. **What are members' responsibilities?**

- Be aware of the CFUW Code of Ethical Behaviour
- Respect the dignity and human rights of all
- Speak up. Raise the issue of unethical behaviour with the person displaying it or the person in authority
- Make every effort to resolve ethical issues by responding to them quickly, informally and in confidence.

6. **What is the Club President's responsibility if an ethical issue arises?**

She should:

- Model ethical behaviour in her role as President
- Once becoming aware of any possible unethical behaviour take immediate action in consultation with the Club Executive
- Settle the matter informally and in confidence
- If the situation cannot be resolved, consult the Regional Director (RD)/Vice President (VP)

7. **What is the role of the regional VP in dealing with ethical issues?**

Regional VPs in concert with the regional RDs have the following responsibilities:

- Promote awareness of the Code of Ethical Behaviour
- Consult with and provide advice to Club Presidents
- Receive complaints from Club Presidents and ensure appropriate action is initiated
- Work collaboratively with others involved and conduct an investigation if required

8. **What should you do if you are accused of unethical behaviour?**

You should:

- Try to resolve the situation by listening to the complainant and attempting to understand her position
- Be open to the other person's perspective and consider the impact of your remarks on the other person

- Consider a sincere apology and be willing to make reasonable changes that could make a difference in the relationship
- Keep the issue confidential
- If necessary, seek assistance at another level of the executive

9. **What can you do if you are treated in an unethical manner?**

Every situation is unique, but whenever possible, a quick, informal and confidential resolution of an issue is preferable.

Informal Process:

Level 1:

Be Proactive. Approach the member who offended you and calmly and in confidence explain why you are so upset.

Level 2:

If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction or you are not comfortable addressing the issue on your own, discuss both the problem and possible solutions with your Club President.

If the issue is with the Club President, contact one of the Club's executives. Confidential considerations should be discussed and agreed upon.

Level 3:

If neither avenue is available to you, you may contact your regional RD or someone more senior. It is wise to take notes on the dates, times, nature of the behaviour, any witnesses to the incident and what was done. These notes will be useful for anyone assisting in resolving the problem.

10. **What is involved in a formal process?**

Most complaints can be resolved between the parties involved, with subsequent monitoring by the club president and club executive to ensure that there is no recurrence. However, if allegations are denied, a more formal investigation may be required.

Generally the investigation will include:

- Interviewing the person who registered the complaint
- Advising and discussing the process to be followed
- Interviewing any witnesses

- Interviewing the person who is alleged to have acted unethically and hearing the response, maintaining confidentiality in all meetings
- Providing findings to the national HR Committee
- Recommending an appropriate response which may include disciplinary action

11. What support is available to VP's, RDs, and Committee Chairs?

The Human Resources Committee may provide support and can be contacted through the National Office.

12. How should a club president or other designated authority communicate with the individual raising the concern and the person alleged to have committed the unethical behaviour?

She will communicate with the individual raising the concern by:

- Listening carefully and taking the issue seriously
- Discussing the process to be followed
- Directing the individual to keep the matter confidential
- Informing and supporting the individual throughout the process
- Informing the individual of the investigative findings and actions taken by the club, ensuring the situation is documented appropriately (See Appendix 1 for the form)

She will communicate with the person alleged to have committed the disrespectful behaviour by:

- Informing the person of the complaint
- Giving her an opportunity to respond to the allegations
- Discussing the process to be followed
- Directing them to keep the matter confidential
- Informing the person throughout the process
- Informing the person of the outcome of the investigation

13. Are complaints kept confidential?

Club Presidents and Executive will keep the details of a complaint confidential. However, witnesses may be involved.

14. What if a club member/volunteer makes a false allegation?

If the investigation proves that the complaint was deliberately made for frivolous or vindictive reasons, the club member/volunteer making the false allegation is subject to action as decided by the club president or designated authority in consultation with the club executive. This does not apply to complaints made in good faith but which are not proven.

15. What if the National President or a National Board member has exhibited unethical behaviour?

The individual raising the concern should:

- Contact the Chairs of the HR Committee and Governance Committee.
- The individual may wish to include two other club members she feels comfortable with and also accepted by the Chairs above.
- Together they can agree on a course of action that would likely include:
 - Informing the person of the complaint
 - Giving her an opportunity to respond to the allegations
 - Discussing the process to be followed
 - Directing her to keep the matter confidential
 - Informing the person throughout the process
 - Informing the person of the outcome of the investigation
- During the investigation notes should be taken to include dates, times, details of the complaint and response decisions made.

Appendix A

Report of Unethical Behaviour

_____ Informal Report

_____ Formal Report

Please note: Keep a copy of an Informal Report at the local level.

A copy of a Formal Report should be sent to the Human Resources Committee This can be done by email. Send it to the Executive Director at National Office with Subject line: HR Committee Confidential with the documentation attached as Word documents. She will forward the email with attachments to the Chair of HR Committee.

WHAT HAPPENED? (objectively state details)

WHO WAS INVOLVED? (include names of parties involved and witnesses, if any)

WHEN AND WHERE DID THE INCIDENT TAKE PLACE? (specify the specific location, date and time of incident)

WHAT REDRESS WAS/IS BEING SOUGHT?

WHAT CONCLUSION WAS REACHED?

ACTIONS PREVIOUSLY TAKEN?

NEXT STEPS, IF NECESSARY?

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNATURE-----DATE-----



APPENDIX B

Example Tests of Ethical Behaviour

1. Values Test

Are you clear about the values reflected in your decision?
Are they values that you and CFUW are proud to hold?

2. Reasonable Person Test

Would a reasonable person in the community, having knowledge of all the facts, consider that you have acted fairly, honourably and nationally?

Would your action or behaviour be seen as consistent with your CFUW position and/or your profession/ interests/career outside of CFUW?

3. Credit Test

If your action or decision became known to everyone, would it bring credit or discredit to you or to CFUW?

4. 8 Ethical Test Questions

The following 8 questions can help us make a good ethical decision in any situation:

1. The Golden Rule Test: Would I want people to do this to me?
2. The Truth Test: Does this action represent the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
3. The What-If-Everybody-Did-This Test: Would I want everyone to do this (lie, cheat, steal, litter the school, etc.)? Would I want to live in that kind of world?
4. The Parents Test: How would my parents feel if they found out I did this? What advice would they give me if I asked them if I should do it?
5. The Religion Test: If I have religious beliefs, how do they apply to this action? What would a respected member of my religion advise? Are there any religious texts that I could draw on for guidance?
6. The Conscience Test: Does this go against my conscience? Will I feel guilty afterwards?
7. The Consequences Test: Might this action have bad consequences, such as damage to relationships or loss of self-respect, now or in the future? Might I come to regret doing this?
8. The Front Page Test: How would I feel if my action were reported on the front page of my hometown paper?

-Dr. Tom Lickona, *Character Matters* (www.Amazon.com)

APPENDIX C

General Questions and Answers from the AGM 2017 Workshop participants

1. Who is available to guide me through this document?

Your Club President, Regional Director, Regional Vice President or a member of the Human Resources Committee.

2. How will this document be distributed?

Roll out of this policy will begin with the National Board, then the Regional Director Committee to review with each of their club presidents. It is expected the club president will distribute to their members.

The policy will be posted on the members resource website.

3. What could you provide to train people in the interpersonal skills needed to implement this policy?

If anyone requires assistance with implementing the policy directives, then the member should contact the Regional Director.

4. Is being asked to sponsor an event and getting publicity for it, (by providing money) –is it ethical/correct to give a tax receipt for this money?

Not sure of the entire situation. Would require additional details.

5. Definition of embarrassment, such as a person who is embarrassed by praised, or a public thank you would be useful.

Knowing that a person would be embarrassed by praise or a situation, it may be better to ask permission of the person – how to receive the praise or acknowledgement or confidentially how to handle the situation.

6. What about whistleblower protection?

This is an interesting question. Members or employees should consult with the HR Committee, if feel threatened in a situation.

7. What is the enforcement if not followed?

Possible termination of employment or membership.

8. What are the support mechanisms and guidelines?

Support is always available. Consulting with the HR Committee is the first step.

9. Reasonable Person Test: “in the interest nationally – in the interest of the *national* organization?”

Yes. This policy is about our organization, its employees, members, volunteers and stakeholders.

10. Have the policies been reviewed for adherence to Canada’s Freedom of Speech legislation, i.e. opinions that may be in disagreement with others but do not contravene any human rights laws i.e. Prohibited grounds?

The language in this policy was scrutinized by our legal counsel. There was no issue with the language.

11. Reasonable Person Test: does not meet the definition of a reasonable person i.e. ...from the complainant’s perspective?

It is unclear the intent/nature of the question.